

REMARKS

Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 2-7, 9-12 and 18 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 1, 8, 17 and 19-21 are canceled in this application. Applicant reserves the right to refile claims 13-17 and 19-21 as one or more Continuation Applications. Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging the existence of patentable subject matter in claims 2, 3, 9 and 17, all of which are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 1, 4-8, 10-12 and 18 presently stand rejected.

The drawings filed January 2, 2002 are accepted by the Examiner.

In regard to the claim rejections, claims 1, 11, 12 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by JP 2000-163730; Claims 4 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 2001-49007; Claims 5, 7 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 2001-49007; and Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 2001-49007 and further in view of Goto (USP 5,324,582).

For the following reason Applicant requests withdrawal of the rejections and favorable disposition of the application.

Response

In order to expedite prosecution Applicant has amended the claims to include the allowable subject matter indicated by the Examiner. All pending claims should now be in condition for immediate allowance.

In particular, as illustrated above, based on the indicated allowability of claims 2 and 3, Applicant has amended claims 2 and 3 to be in independent form and to include the subject

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
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matter of claim 1. Further, Applicant has amended claim 4 to include the subject matter of claim 8 and allowable claim 17. Claims 1, 8 and 17 are canceled. Also, claims 5-7 and 9 are amended to reflect the amendment of claim 4 and claims 11 and 12 are amended to depend from allowable claim 4. Lastly, we propose amending claim 18 to include the allowable subject matter from claim 2.

Conclusion

In view of the amendments and remarks, the application is believed to be in form for immediate allowance with claims 2-7, 9-12 and 18, and such action is hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, he is kindly requested to **contact the undersigned** at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

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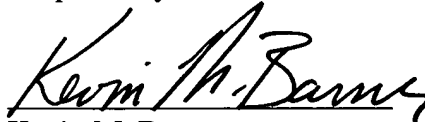
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Respectfully submitted,



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